

THORNY CROWNS.

Strange Fate of All Sovereign Ladies Not of Royal Birth.

Queens From the People.

Queen Draga's shocking death at Belgrade serves to draw attention again to the more than ordinary share of misfortunes that has fallen to the lot of every one of those women who have been raised from among the people to sovereign rank. I am perfectly aware that there exists a popular impression to the effect that thrones in these modern times are beyond the reach of those who do not happen to be of imperial or royal birth. But the fact remains that during the last hundred years there have been nearly a dozen instances of scepters being won by women of parentage that was either merely noble or else bourgeois. The great Napoleon was wont to remark that every brave soldier carried the baton of a marshal of France in his knapsack. In the same manner, especially since Alice Helms, of New Orleans, became the consort of the reigning Prince of Monaco, it may be said that every pretty girl carries in her Saratoga trunk the diadem of a queen or of an empress. The crowns thus attained, however, have, as I have stated above, proved of an exceedingly thorny character. Indeed, these fair sovereigns remain on record as objects of sympathy and of pity rather than envy, and the celebrity which surrounds their name is due not so much to the brilliancy as to the sadness of their lot.

Josephine and Hortense.

Empress Josephine, born as Mile. Tascher de la Pagerie, owes her place in the niche of history to the heartless treatment to which she was subjected by her husband, and she is remembered, not as the brilliant and frivolous consort of the monarch who, for twelve years, was the mightiest in Christendom, but as the pitiable victim of his selfish ambition and of his cruelty.

Equally sad was the fate of the beautiful Hortense, mother of Napoleon III, and born as Mile. de Beauharnais, who, from the day she became Queen of Holland until the time of her death in poverty, abandonment, and exile, was a disappointed, sorrowing and heart-broken woman. The gilded apple of royalty, which had been placed in her hands in 1804, had turned into Dead Sea fruit. She had seen her eldest son die, her second son killed, and her third son a fugitive, forced to seek a haven of refuge in the United States. The very name she bore was proscribed, all her relatives were either in banishment or dead, while her poverty was so great that she was forced to appeal for relief to King Louis Philippe, the bitter enemy of her house and the most relentless persecutor of her surviving son.

Nor was the fate of Queen Caroline Murat, whose husband was first imprisoned and then executed by order of the Bourbon King of Naples, any happier.

Queen Desirée of Sweden.

Julia and Desirée Clary, the two daughters of the Marseilles broker who became respectively Queen of Spain and Queen of Sweden, were both noted for their domestic sorrows and for the neglect and indignities of every kind to which they were subjected by their husbands. Queen Desirée of Sweden died at Stockholm some five and twenty years ago, and in going through my boyhood memories I am able to recall to mind a trip to Stockholm, and being taken by my father to kiss the small and fragile hand of a singularly sweet-faced old lady—a vision of black lace, white hair, and still wonderfully brilliant black eyes—who enjoyed the distinction of having killed the great Napoleon previous to her union to his rival, General Bernadotte. Curiously enough, she could never be persuaded to revisit her native country, and from the time of her husband Bernadotte's arrival in Sweden in 1810, after his election as crown prince of that country, she never left the dual kingdom to the day of her death. She retained, however, to the last, all her French sympathies and tastes. Every Frenchman who visited Stockholm was made welcome at her palace, and she displayed the keenest interest in French politics, French social events, and French literature.

Eugenie's Tragic Fate.

Exile, widowhood, and the tragic death of her only son in South Africa have endowed Eugenie de Montijo, the granddaughter of the Scotch merchant Kirkpatrick, with a majesty which, though sorrowful, is far superior to any which she ever possessed in the days of her greatest magnificence at the Tuilleries. The aspect of the once beautiful, brilliant and supremely elegant, but now broken, infirm, and aged consort of Napoleon III is sufficient to excite commiseration even in the hearts of the bitterest enemies of the Bonaparte's regime. To such an extent is this the case that when she first visited Paris again a few years ago the mob of men and women who had assembled at the railroad terminus to hoot and hiss her on her arrival, for her alleged responsibility in the disastrous war of 1870, made way respectfully for her, the men baring their heads and the women murmuring pitifully, "Oh, la pauvre femme" (Oh, the poor woman), while this wreck of former splendor, beauty, and elegance limped feebly to her carriage.

Romance of Natalie.

Yet another of these heroines of royal romance is Natalie de Ketchko, the more or less legally divorced Queen of the late King Milan of Serbia. Her life until now has been more strange, more extraordinary, and more full of exciting incident than those of the three other ladies above mentioned. Were it described in a novel it would be set down as extravagant, unreal, and impossible; but far from such being the case, it constitutes one of the most romantic pages of the contemporary history of Europe.

Born in 1859, at Florence, Queen Nat-

alie is the daughter of the exceedingly wealthy Colonel de Ketchko, an officer of the Russian commissary department, who died a few years ago. Her mother from whom she inherits her magnificent and somewhat voluptuous style of beauty, was a member of the Roumanian family of Stourdza, while her grandmother on the paternal side was a daughter of the Dojar Constantine Balsic, a name which, of noble French origin, is gloriously associated with the history of the old Servian Empire five and six centuries ago.

Queen Natalie spent most of her childhood at Florence, where she attended one of the schools, a number of American girls being among her classmates. On completing her education she lived some time on her father's estates in southern Russia, and at St. Petersburg, where she, however, did not figure among what Thackeray describes as the "upper circles." For her father, although very wealthy, occupied a relatively subaltern position in the imperial service, and her mother's title and lineage carried but little weight in the Russian capital, princesses, especially those of the Stourdza family, being as plentiful as mere peasants, and only rarely as respectable in Roumania and Bessarabia.

Her Marriage to Milan.

Natalie was affianced to Colonel Constantinevich, of the Serbian army, when a few days prior to the date set for the wedding she made the acquaintance of her cousin, Prince Milan, who was to be the principal guest at the ceremony. The latter never took place. For Milan, infatuated by Natalie's beauty, and eager for her fortune, at once proceeded to play his customary role of false friend by supplanting his cousin in her affections, and a few weeks later Natalie became by her marriage to Milan, first the sovereign princess, and then the Queen of Serbia. The union was unhappy from the very outset, owing to the discovery that his wife's fortune was so completely tied up and well protected that he could not even touch it. Moreover, her high spirit and strong temper did not tend to improve matters, and even before the birth of their only son the

stories of their differences became the talk of every court in Europe.

So much has been published on both sides of the Atlantic during the last few weeks concerning Serbian royalty that it would be superfluous to make here more than a passing reference to the gross indignities by means of which Milan compelled Natalie to quit Serbia, to the manner in which her only son, at that time eight years of age, was forcibly torn from her side by the police at Wiesbaden, to the way in which this very son, the apple of her eye, turned against her when King and banished disapproved his marriage, and finally to the manner in which she learned at Versailles of his terrible death. Today she is, like ex-Empress Eugenie, a woman without a country or nationality, who has lost both husband and only son.

Draga's Shocking Death.

Still less is it necessary to give here the record of Queen Draga. It is not a savory one, and save for the few years she spent under the roof of Queen Natalie as her lady-in-waiting, until dismissed in disgrace, and for the time that she was the legal consort of King Alexander of Serbia, it can scarcely be described as reputable. That her marriage brought her happiness it is difficult to believe. For she was from the very outset subjected to the most cruel affronts not only by the foreign courts, but by her own people, who did not hesitate to give expression to their resentment that a woman of her questionable antecedents should occupy a seat on the throne of Serbia. She knew that both her husband and herself were in constant danger of the tragic fate which ultimately overtook them, and it is doubtful indeed if she ever had a moment's tranquillity and freedom from anxiety of the most hideous character, at any rate during the last twelve months of her life.

More fortunate is the New Orleans girl, Alice Helms, who, having failed to find in her union with the reigning Prince of Monaco that happiness and consideration which she expected (but which she enjoyed in her first marriage to the late Duc de Richelieu), has effected a separation from Albert I, declining any longer to share his Rouge-et-Noir throne.

EX-ATTACHE.

RODNEY'S RIDE.

JULY 4, 1776.

In that soft midland where the breezes bear
The North and the South on the genial air,
Through the county of Kent on affairs of state
Rode Caesar Rodney, the delegate.

Burly and big, and bold and bluff,
In his three-cornered hat and his coat of snuff,
A foe to King George and the English state
Was Caesar Rodney, the delegate.

Into Dover village he rode apace,
And his kinsfolk knew, from his anxious face,
That matter grave that had brought him there,
To the counties three upon Delaware.

"Money and men we must have," he said,
"Or the Congress fails and our cause is dead.
Give us both and the King shall not work his will—
We are MEN, since the blood of Bunker Hill!"

Come a rider swift on a panting bay:
"Hollo, Rodney, ho! you must save the day,
For the Congress halts at a deed so great,
And your vote alone may decide its fate!"

Answered Rodney then: "I will ride with speed;
It is Liberty's stress; it is Freedom's need.
When stands its?" "Tonight. Not a moment spare,
But ride like the wind from the Delaware."

"Ho, saddle the black! I've but half a day,
And the Congress sits eighty miles away—
But I'll be in time if God grants me grace,
To shake my fist in King George's face."

He is up; he is off; and the black horse flies
On the northward road ere the "Godspeed" dies.
It is gallop and spur, as the leagues they clear,
And the clustering mile-stones move a-rear.

It is two of the clock, and the fleet hoofs fling
The Fieldsboro' dust with a clang and cling.
It is three, and he gallops with slack rein where
The road winds down to the Delaware.

Four, and he spurs into New Castle town,
From his panting steed he gets him down—
"A fresh one, quick; not a moment wait!"
And off speeds Rodney, the delegate.

It is five, and the beams of the Western sun
Tinge the spires of Wilmington, gold and dun.
Six, and the dust of the Chester Street
Flies back in a cloud from his courser's feet.

It is seven; the horse-boat, broad of beam,
At the Schuylkill ferry crawls over the stream—
And at seven-fifteen by the Rittenhouse clock
He flings his rein to the tavern Joek.

The Congress is met; the debate's begun,
And Liberty lags for the vote of one—
When into the hall, not a moment late,
Walks Caesar Rodney, the delegate.

Not a moment late; and that half day's ride
Forwards the world with a mighty stride—
For the Act was passed ere the midnight stroke
O'er the Quaker City its echoes woke.

At Tyranny's feet was the gauntlet flung;
"We are free!" all the bells through the colonies rung.
And the sons of the free may recall with pride
The day of Delegate Rodney's ride.

PSYCHE AND THE DRAGON FYY

By EVANGELINE C. MERRITT.

FARMER CRABTREE entered the store of Johnson, Howard & Johnson, where diamonds, jewelry, silverware, cutglass and bric-a-brac were sold to people willing to pay high prices for the right articles. It was an understood fact that they catered only to the rich. Mr. Crabtree strolled around and looked at things.

"How much is that silver platter?" he asked of a haughty young man behind the counter.

"The silver is \$175," with a none-of-your-business - you-haven't-money-enough-to-buy-it air.

"Hum," he commented and walked on.

"Got any bronze images around here?" he asked again, of a stylishly dressed young woman with a huge pompadour over her left eye.

"On the third floor," turning with an engaging smile to a fast-looking man who had asked a question.

Mr. Crabtree was dressed in his black Sunday suit, paper collar, a ready-made cheap black tie and a straw hat. His shirt bosom humped and was slightly belted where it had come in contact with his chin. Well down the front, below the eyelet-hole, gutless of stud, was a large buckleberry stain.

He wore a fringe of hair beneath his jaw, and his face and hands showed the wear and tear of years of honest toil, while his intense blue eyes had a merry twinkle and he did not appear to notice that he had not received the attention accorded the well dressed man.

Halting deliberately, he scratched his chin, looked them both over, and sauntered on, with a rhythmical bending of the knees he had acquired as he sowed his broad acres.

He went to the third floor; several of the clerks exchanged glances, but did not offer to wait on him.

"I'm looking for bronze images," he announced, to no one in particular.

A young girl came forward.

"Bronzes? Right this way, sir. Was there any special subject you were looking for?" She couldn't have spoken with more deference to Croesus himself.

"Wall, no. Phyllis Chloe (that's my niece), we always called her Chloe Ann 'till she went to college. Now she's disowned the 'Ann' and stuck 'Phyllis' onto the other end" (he chuckled), "but I told Cynthia (Cynthia's my wife), it didn't do no harm to put on a few airs when you was young so long as you didn't hurt nobody's feelin'."

"No, indeed," chimed in the clerk with the violet eyes; "so you are looking for a bronze for this niece Phyllis?" she asked, bringing him tactfully back to the subject.

"Yes, Phyllis Chloe's goin' to get married, and Cynthia says, 'Chloe Ann' (Cynthia always calls her Chloe Ann. Cynthia's a good woman, but awful sot in her ways), been ravin' 'bout a bronze image with 'lectric lights on it, for her setting room with the staircase.' Chloe sticks to it it's nothing more nor less than a setting room with a staircase in it. She 'lowed that when gals get married they ought to have their own way as far as their kindred can give it to 'em, 'cause afterward there is always a dum fool to express his opinion and stick in an oar on every occasion.

Cynthia does like to give the men a dig." He shook his head and laughed again.

"I know some very nice men," she arched her eyebrows and looked at him. "Here is a beautiful thing, Psyche, by—" pulling the heavy plush draperies across the alcove where Johnson, Howard & Johnson's stock of bronze deities sat in state. She turned on the electric lights artistically arranged about the figure and told him the story of Cupid's sweetheart. He was intensely interested.

"Wall, I'll be durned!" he exclaimed as she touched a button and lighted the mystical box.

Then this obliging young woman tried to show him some of the other electrical statuary, but he cared only for Psyche.

It was a magnificent piece of workmanship, and its price was \$300. Farmer Crabtree looked at the bronze meditatively.

"She ain't got many clothes on," he said, "but I'll take her if I conclude to have an image with 'lectric lights. How much is it?"

"Four hundred dollars with the pedestal."

"Hum, I had thought of sumthin' in dimons, myself; Phyllis Chloe's goin' to marry a feller with lots of money."

The little clerk's eyes sparkled.

"Do you know, if I was your niece and you were going to put so much money into a present, I should much prefer diamonds. There is a most beautiful dragon-fly downstairs. Ornaments of that sort are quite the thing now. If you will go down with me, I will have the clerk show it to you. Oh, it is so lovely."

Downstairs they went, chatting together like old friends, he telling her all about Phyllis Chloe's "beau."

She took him to the counter, where a young man of the "Gibson type" presided over the diamonds.

"Show this gentleman the dragon-fly," she ordered pleasantly. He did not stir, but looked the old man over superciliously.

"A relative of yours?" he asked.

"Yes." The violet eyes glittered, as they challenged the Gibson man.

"By marriage?" sneeringly.

"By the ties of human kindness," she retorted.

"The pin is worth \$500," with a th-

settles-it tone, the keeper of the dragon-fly said, as he turned to another customer, who was enjoying the situation.

"Is that all? Well, you sell your things too god darned cheap, young feller. Why don't you stick up a sign over your bargain?"

The girl made up her mind that the dragon-fly was coming out. She called a floor walker.

"Mr. Black is not willing to show this gentleman the dragon brooch. He is a friend of mine, and is looking for a wedding gift."

She was risking her position and acknowledging the truth, but her blood boiled at such insolence. The Gibson man put the shining insect on the showcase with alacrity.

She held it to the light and showed her "friend" all the fine points of the setting; called his attention to the "century" cut of the stones, and to the rare fire in the glowing rubies.

He took more notice of her radiant face as she enthused over the gems than he did of the jewel itself. She felt elated when he said he guessed he'd go back and "look at the critter with the 'lectric lights again. Cynthia's so sot in her ways."

"I shall hear from this," thought the little clerk uneasily, as she went again to display Psyche's charms.

Farmer Crabtree looked at the girl thoughtfully as he drew from somewhere in the region of his heart an old brown wallet, mottled with age, and unfolded a long string.

"Put in the post it sets on. I'll go the whole figger," he ordered as he paid for the statue. "Have it shipped to Bristol before night, an' tomorrow I'll take the farm wagon an' cart it up to the new house. Guess I forgot to tell you Chloe Ann's goin' to live in Bristol, didn't I, sis?"

"When you want anything more come to me. I shall always be glad to wait on you; my number is 42," she said, as they parted at the elevator.

Mr. Crabtree was in fighting trim when he reached the first floor. He marched over in front of the diamond counter, sat down on a fragrant tabourette, folded his arms and bellowed, "Where's the proprietor of this store?"

"I'm going to have that devil's darnin' needle with the red spots on its wings, but I'll set here till Gabriel blows his horn and wait for the boss of this establishment, before that air hawked-nose, picket-faced Injun shall git any commissions out of anything I buy, god darn him. Or any other of your stuck-up clerks," he shouted as he glared fiercely around the store.

Mr. Johnson, the senior partner, was in the office. Hearing the disturbance he came forward in time to get the full benefit of Farmer Crabtree's remarks. The clerks all looked unconcerned though they felt frightened. Mr. Johnson was a severe man.

"You asked for me, sir?"

"De you Mr. Johnson?"

"I am."

"Then gimme that devil's darnin' needle."

He took out his old wallet, removed five crisp \$100 bills, and handed them to the astonished Mr. Johnson. Then he addressed the public general:

"I don't wear clown's pants, nor a shade hat that cost \$75, but I pay for my clothes when I got 'em, and I don't have to stand behind a counter and sass folks for no \$10 a week."

The "Injun" did not reply. Farmer Crabtree had made two shrewd guesses.

"I'll take a receipt for that, if it's all the same to you, mister," he said to Mr. Johnson, who was putting the dragon fly in a white satin case.

"Is there anything else I can do for you?" Mr. Johnson inquired as he handed the receipt and the package to Mr. Crabtree.

"Well, yes, there is, if you'll come up-

stairs a minute." They stepped into the elevator together.

"You've got one good clerk in this store, and I tell you, Mr. Johnson, good clerks count in your business. There she is over there dustin' that hidja idol," he continued, after the elevator had stopped at the third floor. "Take this dition' bug over there and tell her 'a relative by the ties of human kindness' sent it to her,"—his eyes glistened—"I'll stand out of the way so I can see her face when she opens the gimcrack," he ordered.

"Down?" asked the elevator boy.

"Yes; wait a minute."

Mr. Johnson entered into the spirit of the gift and went quickly to No. 42, who looked startled for an instant, but he gave her Farmer Crabtree's message and the box.

"For me, from that dear old gentleman who bought the bronze?" the eager listener standing in the waiting elevator heard her exclaim. Then came a shriek of delight as she opened the box and snatched the glorious "bug" from its satin case and hugged it to her bosom.

"O! you darling; you are too pretty for me," she cried, as the tears of gratitude sprang to her eyes. "Is he downstairs?" she asked Mr. Johnson rather incoherently.

"Look toward the elevator."

The girl darted forward to thank her benefactor, but he commanded "Let her go, boy, never mind me," and the elevator shot down.

"Some folks do things after they're dead and buried, but I do 'em while I'm on top o' the ground, so's to git some o' the fun," he chuckled to himself as he walked quickly out of the store.

"What Cynthia don't know she can't jaw 'bout."

Mr. Johnson went to the office. "Miss Williams' pay (No. 42's) pay is to be raised \$5 a week, and she is to be given full charge of the third floor," he told the bookkeeper.—St. Paul Dispatch.

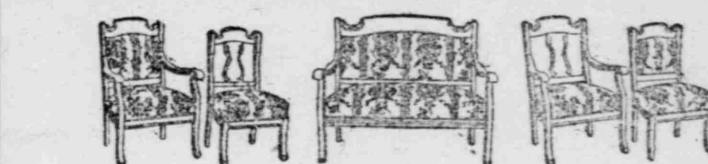
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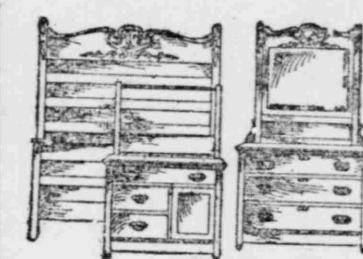
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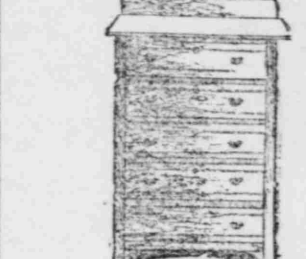
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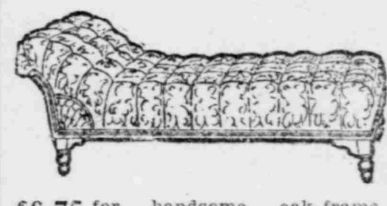
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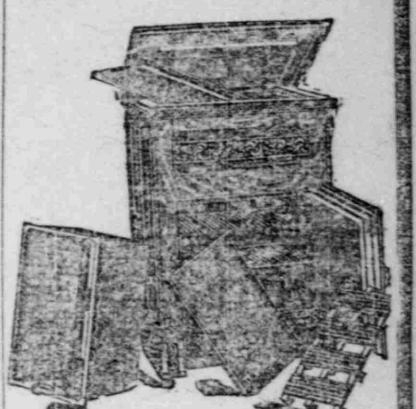
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